

# Tips for Dusty Jobs – Mobile Equipment Operators



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## Health Hazard Information Card HH-34

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Loader operators and mobile equipment operators are exposed to more dust than the typical mine employee. Because mine dust may have silica in it, you should take steps to protect yourself against a possible health hazard.

### **Silicosis Can Be Deadly**

Some dust is stopped by the body's natural defense system, but the smallest dust particles can penetrate deep into the lungs. The harm from dust depends on what it's made of, what size it is, how much you breathe, and how long you breathe it. If you're exposed to enough dust with silica, in time you can get a disease called **silicosis**.

Silicosis can be a disabling, *even fatal*, illness that can't be reversed once a person has it. Lung tissue becomes scarred and inflexible and breathing becomes harder and harder.

**If it's silica ...  
it's not just dust.**

# **Silicosis can't be reversed ... but it can be prevented.**

## **WORKING SMART**

- Dusty haul road or loading area? Ask to have the water truck make a pass.
- Compressed air is NOT for cleaning clothes or equipment.
- Work upwind of dust clouds or dusty areas.

## **THE CAB**

- Use a heater and an air conditioner with a HEPA\* filter.
- Keep doors and windows closed for positive pressurizing.
- Make sure there are no leaks or openings where dust could enter.
- Check that seals are pliable and intact.
- Clean the cab every day.
- Use a vacuum with a remotely located exhaust or a HEPA filter.

## **RESPIRATORS MUST BE...**

- The right type and worn right.
- Clean.
- Worn – not hung on your neck or on top of your hat.
- The right fit to stop dust from getting into your lungs.
- A good fit – Beards prevent it.

\* **High Efficiency Particulate Air**  
*(always maintain the HEPA filter according to manufacturer's instructions)*